

Summary of the 18th teleconference of the Chemicals in Products project Steering Group, 1 March 2016

Participants:

Anna Fransson, Swedish Chemicals Agency (KEMI), Chair of the Steering Group
Astrid Télasco, Environment Canada, Canada [Western European and Others Group regional representative]
Magnus Bengtsson, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan [Asia-Pacific regional representative]
Marcus Richards, , Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines [GRULAC regional representative]
Lindita Tafaj, Institute of Public Health, Albania [Central and Eastern Europe regional representative]
Mahmood Khwala, [Health sector representative]
Michelle Orfei, ACC [Industry sector representative]
Olga Speranskaya, IPEN [Public interest sector representative]
Brian Kohler [Workers representative]
Timo Unger [Hyundai-KIA motors – Industry sector representative]
Johan Holmqvist [Sony Mobile SA – Industry sector representative]
Kevin Munn, UNEP Chemicals and Waste Branch

Agenda items:

- 1. Discussions of the draft terms of reference (TOR) for the Steering Group**
- 2. Presentation by the Secretariat of the work plan**
- 3. Planning a face-to-face meeting of the Group**
- 4. Any other business**

Meeting summary:

Anna Fransson chaired the teleconference.

General discussion at the outset of the call - summary

UNEP gave a brief summary of the discussion and noted the general lack of contentious comments about the Chemicals in Products Programme and Guidance at ICCM4. The general attitude at the Conference was satisfaction with the documents and eagerness to move to implementation.

The Group noted that the Chemicals in Products Programme could, for example, look at POPs and mercury in products. It was noted that these chemicals are included within implementation activities promoted by UNEP, as existing and foreseen GEF projects, for example, include POPs and mercury on the lists of chemicals to be included in the information exchange, as well as other chemicals of concern.

A brief summary of proposed externally funded projects was made by UNEP: a GEF project proposal for the textiles sector is currently being reviewed by the GEF Secretariat. This would be the second project in this sector, and it would build on the lessons of the first one (still under implementation in China). This second proposal would foresee project activities in China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan and Indonesia. In addition to fostering CiP information exchange in the supply chains for production in these countries, alternatives assessments and substitution actions would also be included. The duration of the project would be 4-5 years.

The Steering Group comments here included the need to ensure NGO inclusion in the project activities, and the need to link the activities to particular consumer information. This was generally agreed, and UNEP noted that there is a Consumer Information programme managed by the UNEP DTIE offices in Paris, and that those activities were already coordinating with the CiP project activities. One needed element to be elaborated is what information to present to consumers (i.e. what is the “useful information, in a useable format”).

A Group member voiced concerns about the evolution of activities. They noted that the information which reaches the consumer and worker is limited; the quantity and quality of the data are often lacking (there is not full disclosure of data, for example); and that there are also representations made under initiatives that are not accurate. UNEP recognized that shortcomings in CiP information access exist in many areas. However, the Programme objectives are a means to address these. The quantity and quality of data exchanged are addressed via the three objectives; to meet these the exchanged information should be accurate, current and sufficient.

A remark was made that many government ministries have a CiP information solution. The question then became: Is there a coordinating role of UNEP or the Steering Group? UNEP proposed to capture this information as it is forwarded by the Steering Group members, and the Group generally noted that they would like to be kept up-to-date on these initiatives (also in other regions).

1. Discussions of the draft terms of reference (TOR) for the Steering Group

Referring to the draft TOR:

For paragraph 13 of the TOR, which deals with reports of Steering Group meetings, the question was raised as to the timing of the documents being posted. It was agreed that the TOR was not the place to specify this. Related to this, however, the Secretariat would commit to circulating the draft of the call record within one week of a teleconference.

On the topic of capacity building to be carried out by Steering Group members (paragraph 7 of the draft TOR), the Secretariat elaborated on this activity, together with the awareness-raising also mentioned in the para 7 text. This refers to actions such as:

presentation of the Programme in suitable forums; facilitation of dialogue to share or promote practices or highlighting lessons learned between their constituents; and engaging the stakeholders they represent in the formulation of CiP Programme piloting or implementation activities.

It was generally acknowledged that awareness raising is much needed, as the CiP Programme is not well known. The Secretariat noted that the SAICM national focal points are the first point of contact in the countries for Steering Group member outreach activities. Specific groups can be identified by the Steering Group members for a targeted presentation. UNEP is available to assist in events (e.g. webinars) organized by Steering Group members, as has been the case in the past and as is planned.

The high involvement of implementation activities (pilots and project proposals) in the Asia-Pacific region was pointed out, along with the desire to see a more regional balance to such activities. The Secretariat explained that the current countries were the result of working significantly with textile sector brands (the countries are where their major suppliers are located and their CiP-related initiatives are most promoted). Proposals for working in other regions and with other groups of stakeholders are possible, though it was noted the capacity within UNEP to support multiple work streams is limited.

On paragraph 4, which deals with the composition of the Steering Group, extending membership to upstream suppliers was suggested. A discussion followed on the current direction of looking to expand the Group (to include representation for the product end-of-life phase) and to other product sectors (e.g. toys or building products). Comments on this included that the Group should be kept to a manageable size and, given the many associations that could potentially represent a relevant stakeholder group in a product sector, that keeping balance in the Group will be difficult if many more private sector representatives are added.

One Steering Group member made a general comment on the TOR, that they would like to see more directive than passive language. They will forward written suggestions.

Action item: Further comments on the TOR are invited to be sent in writing (deadline COB 7 March).

2. Presentation by the Secretariat of the work plan, followed by discussion

The secretariat presented the work plan, and highlighted priority activities for 2016. These are listed below along with related discussions.

Chemicals in Products Programme web site:

As the main information portal for accessing information on CiP Programme participants and their related actions towards the programme objectives, the web site clearly is a high priority. The suggestion was made to segregate the CiP descriptions on the web site via stakeholder groupings (government, industry, NGO, etc.), which was generally

agreed to. Accessing information on how to join the Programme, what is expected and what each stakeholders group contributes to the CiP information issue was also highlighted as highly relevant for the site.

2016 membership drive:

UNEP detailed the current push to have stakeholders sign up for the CiP Programme. The importance was stressed of efforts by both the Secretariat and by SG members to advertise and push for sign-up for the Programme. As part of the outreach materials needed for this, UNEP is currently drafting concise documents for stakeholders on what the Chemicals in Products Programme is about, why it's relevant to them, the added value of engaging with the SAICM community and how to join. Steering Group members will provide feedback on these outreach materials.

An event to publicize the CiP Programme and support the membership drive is planned for UNEA2 (23-27 May 2016, Nairobi). Details will be circulated to the Group as they are finalized.

3. Planning a face-to-face meeting of the Group

Numerous aspects of a meeting of the Group were discussed, including what objectives the meeting would have, possibilities in terms of timing and location and potential events to pair a Steering Group meeting with (back-to-back opportunities). While it was generally accepted that a back-to-back arrangement with a relevant event would be desirable, no strong possibilities were immediately identified. The current outlook would be that it's preferable to plan for a meeting in the second half of 2016. Steering Group members are encouraged to consider and identify to the Secretariat events they feel would provide mutual benefit to both the Steering Group meeting and the back-to-back event.

4. AOB

A Steering Group member proposed that it would be useful for the Group's members to have a common set of slides with 'core messages' to use in their (personalized) presentations on the Chemicals in Products Programme.

There was general agreement that this is useful, and the secretariat will prepare and circulate some slides with core messages.